



The Ripline

www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS/

Issue 2

2000/2001

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRISTOL UNIVERSITY HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY

Welcome again to The Ripline, BUHABS monthly newsletter. This issue you can look forward to an article about ballooning in Todi, Italy, and news of upcoming social events. The weather in October is usually not very desirable, but this year its been stupidly bad, particularly last week. Despite this BUHABS has still managed to fly several times. If you have signed-up recently and had your flight cancelled, don't despair, the weather can only get better. Those who are interested in how we decide whether to fly or not can read the article on the last page. See you at one of our socials.

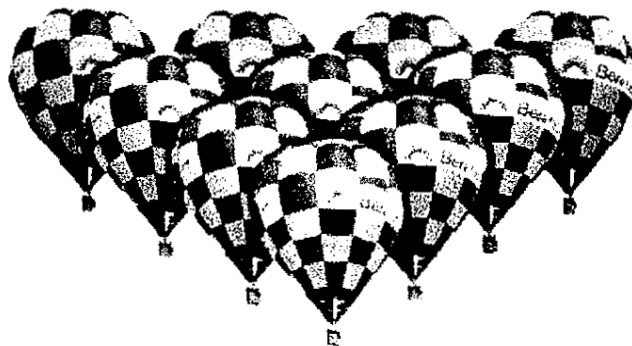
John Burnett

BUHABS TEN PIN BOWLING EVENING

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2000

7:30 PM - OUTSIDE STUDENTS UNION

Ever fancied yourself as the next 'Big Lebowski'? Well, here's your chance. The BUHABS committee are probably about as good at bowling as they are dancing, ensuring there will be plenty to laugh at. If you would like to come, please drop me a line ASAP at the number below, so we can choose a venue and book some lanes.



INTERESTED? CONTACT JOHN BURNETT ON: [REDACTED]

BUHABS PRE - 'SCORE' PUB CRAWL

WEDNESDAY 06 DECEMBER 2000 - 8:00 PM - THE EPI BAR, STUDENTS UNION

As anyone who has been before will tell you, 'Score' at 'The Works' is a truly disgraceful evening of the highest order. We think it is only proper that we make a contribution toward the proceedings and show our faces. However, if you just want to come for a quick drink, we will be in the 'Epi' until 9:00 PM. It is suggested that if you are coming to 'Score', you should purchase tickets before hand (about £3). If you are unable to get tickets should contact me at the details above, before Mon 04 Dec.

IMPORTANT - SLIGHT CHANGE TO SIGN-UP PROCEDURE

As of Thursday 09 November 2000 the sign-up list will be available in the Physics building from 2:00 PM, rather than 1:15 PM as it is now. However, this is because it will be found at The White Bear Pub from 12:30 PM until 1:30 PM beforehand. This gives you the opportunity to come and have a lunch-time drink with other members, or ask some of the committee any questions you may have. The rest of the sign-up procedure will remain exactly the same. For those who don't know where The White Bear is, its at the top of Saint Michael's Hill, just before you get to the rank of shops that includes Scumerfield. It's got a great big Polar Bear outside it, so it's not hard to miss. See you there.

SIGN-UP LIST LOCATIONS:

THURSDAY 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM; THE WHITE BEAR PUBLIC HOUSE
THURSDAY 2:00 PM - FRIDAY 1:15 PM; H.H. WILLS PHYSICS BUILDING



BUHABS CHRISTMAS MEAL



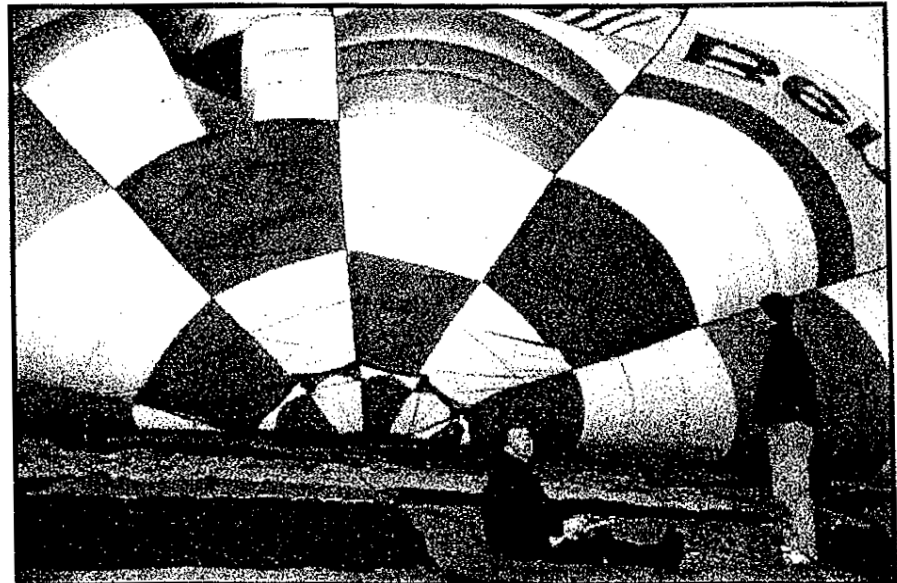
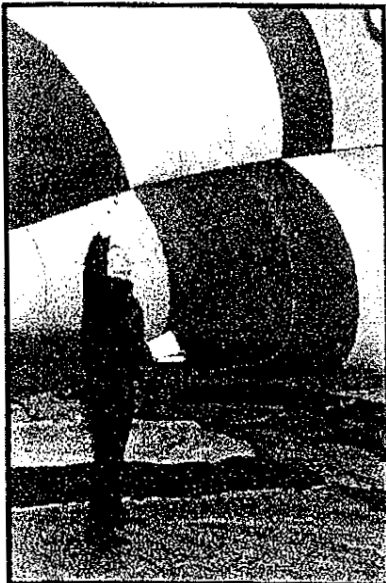
EVENING OF WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2000

We are planning on having a Christmas meal this year. We have not decided exactly where yet, but it will be an informal and hopefully cheap affair. If you are interested, drop us a line soon to give us an idea of numbers. Full details will be in next months edition of The Ripline.

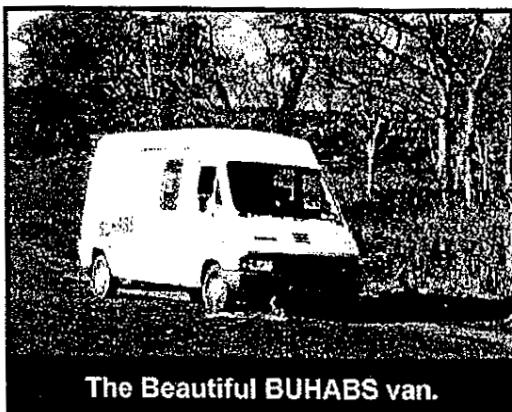
INTERESTED? CONTACT JOHN BURNETT ON: [REDACTED]

COLD FEET INSIDE ANOTHER WORLD

On the morning of Tuesday 17 October 2000, members of the BUHABS committee were made to get out of bed at 6:30 AM. The reason for this was a check up of our Balloon, B5. I am mentioning this as part of the inspection involved inflating the Balloon on the ground and wandering around inside, which was rather surreal as you can see from the pictures. The only problem was our feet got rather nippy, as we had to take off our shoes and wander round in just our socks.



WANTED - DRIVERS FOR THE BUHABS RETRIEVAL VAN



The Beautiful BUHABS van.

If you're over 21 years-of-age and in possession of a full and clean UK driving licence, then you are only short steps away from becoming a BUHABS driver. Drivers are an essential part of the crew, responsible for driving the team to the launch field; following the Balloon during flights with the help of a navigator; and taking them to a greasy spoon cafe after. As well as becoming very popular, benefits include being able to put crewing points towards the cost of flying in the Balloon. Training involves familiarisation of the van and protocol followed by a short drive around town. The final step is to then go out on a supervised retrieve.

INTERESTED? CONTACT SIMON CHURCH ON: [REDACTED]

ERRATUM

Last issue The Ripline failed to point out an important fact, TIM DUDMAN IS VERY IMPORTANT.

NEWSLINE

OUT OF DATE BALLOONING NEWS PLAGIARISED HERE FIRST

GERMANS LAND IN SCOTLAND AFTER 25 HOUR FLIGHT

The German balloonists who were blown off course and landed in Scotland say their unscheduled stay a few weeks ago had been "fantastic". Heinrich Brachtendorf, 67, and Peter Wittmann, 32, from Marle, stayed in a Carnoustie hotel after they were caught in strong winds and crossed the North Sea. The two friends were taking part in a competition in Marle to see which ballooning team could stay in the air for the longest time. Yet when they realised they had travelled as far as the English coast, they put out a distress call and the RAF swung into action.

Their balloon was first spotted by the RAF off the coast of Grimsby at about 2130BST on the Saturday, and was intercepted by a helicopter. The rescue chopper followed them for several hours and a decision was taken to bring them down. The balloonists landed on a Ministry of Defence training camp close to a beach just outside Carnoustie, near Dundee, at about 0330BST on the Sunday. An MoD spokesman said the balloon was tracked after being picked up by military radar in London.

Mr Wittmann said: "No balloonist knows their destination but the competition is to see how long you could stay in the air. There is no set flight



'Can you give us directions to Frankfurt mate?'

path, you just go up, but we didn't mean to end up over Scotland. We were airborne for 24 or 25 hours. It was the farthest flight, but we were not in the air the longest (*guttled - Ed*)."

The two men travelled home by ferry with their balloon. Lets hope their wives were not too upset they had missed their Sunday roasts.

BALLOONING WITH BUHABS IN TODI, ITALY, SUMMER 2000

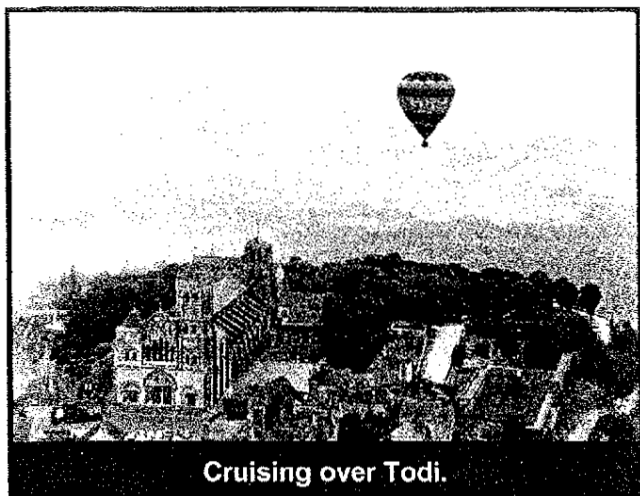
So, How did you spend your summer holidays then? Flipping burgers in the local Macdonalds? Digging Wells in Africa? Most of us end up somewhere in between, but would rather be doing something out of the ordinary than just working to earn cash. Some of us manage to do both...

This summer several members of BUHABS, UWEHABS and Bath University Balloon Club took 2 transits, 4 balloons and 3.5 pilots and set off for adventure in Italy. Every year the small town of Todi in the Umbria Region of Italy hosts the Gran Premio Italiano Mongolfieristieo their equivalent to the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta. This year 50 balloons took part from all over the world and as far afield as America. Todi was a 26-hour non-stop drive from Bristol and we

had enough drivers to continue almost without a break, apart from fuel stops for the vans and more importantly - us. Entertainment was provided by the Bath boys and their CD player - fitted in the fast lane with flickering headlights on route to Dover. We also had retrieve radios for broadcasting essential messages (and at one point a very random rendition of Chef's 'Chocolate Salty Balls' to cheer everyone up).

We passed through France and Germany and Switzerland, which had some beautiful picture-postcard alpine scenery. Onwards from Switzerland to Italy and a night in a comfortable and reasonably priced hotel near Milan. The next morning we duly arrived at our hotel (yes, hotel! no camping this time) in time for check in and refuelling.

Todi is a picturesque Italian town on a hill surrounded by sunflower fields and with some magnificent buildings including a domed church affectionately known as the Titty. The town was surrounded by cut crop and turnip fields (Rich!) which provide many opportunities to land safely. An added bonus was almost zero



Cruising over Todi.

livestock - no landowner relations problems then. In fact Italians see so few balloons that some rush out to offer cups of coffee and glasses of wine to Mongolfiers (Balloonists). Excellent!

The winds around Todi were always light and variable sometimes giving the opportunity to return to the launchfield, splash and dash in the local swimming pool or in Paul's case fly home to his cottage for dinner! It's not always helpful



Fields of sunflowers.

- on one flight with Scott we became caught over some trees at the bottom of a valley and just circled around for ages without going anywhere. Light winds also bring out the hoppers - one man balloons without baskets where the pilots legs dangle in the air. Fun to

watch and popular with the locals who probably see this as evidence that the English are truly eccentric.



Bath and Bristol take-off together.

Although the holiday was fun it was by no means easy. Rise at 5am every morning, drive to the launchsite in the 'Jungle Bus' powered by Prodigy music (It's those bloody students again!...), fly, eat, sleep, get up again at 5pm, fly, eat, sleep. Basically turning 10 days into 20. I don't think anyone got much of a tan although the weather was perfect for sunbathing during the day. On the odd occasion we did get to visit Todi during the day all the shops were shut. They seem to like their siestas these Europeans.



The last landing of our trip.

The fiesta also incorporated an element of competition with a couple of hare and hounds events (where you try and land in the same place as the hare balloon) Unfortunately the hare balloons didn't want to get caught and seemed to try for distance and duration records both times. In the end we gave up and enjoyed the flying and the scenery instead.

Flying in Italy also gives us a chance to fly at a lower level than usual. Although not strictly allowed many balloons were seen taking a close look at the town in flagrant breach of the 500' rule. Some locals were shocked to see a balloon trying to splash in their swimming pool! Retrieving can also be a lot trickier, mainly due to lack of decent maps. The one we were provided with resembling a child's effort at potato printing rather than the OS maps we were used to. However, since it was only a holiday and quite relaxed and there were plenty of balloons to follow and other crews to ask for help. Happy landowners also added to the relaxed

atmosphere. Ralph, the event organiser, arranged free fuel and subsidised accommodation, a balloonists dinner (which seemed to mysteriously disappear after the starters - oh well) and an afternoon picnic which was held on a estate with lots of security gates and resembled to my mind something like a Mafia headquarters. All in all the Italians made us feel very welcome. To summarise, it was a wonderful 10 days, with excellent food and drink and balloon flying twice a day. Many thanks to Scott and Lee for organising everything. I hope we have a holiday this successful next year.

Simon Jenkins

UWEHABS ON-LINE

The UWEHABS website is now up and running and can be found at the following address:

www.uwe.ac.uk/union/uwehabs

If you would like to contribute to the website, please contact Peter Davies at

In case you didn't read it earlier, TIM DUDMAN IS VERY IMPORTANT. He was spotted by a balloon spotter at the Icicle Balloon meet earlier this year you know.



WURZELS UPDATE

I doubt you will remember reading about 'The Wurzels' last issue, but if you do then be sure to heed this special find. On a recent visit to HMV, a minor Special Retrieval operative found copious quantities of the greatest hits CD lying in a golden trough (bargain bin). They were retailing for just £2.99! Go buy it now!

SPECIAL RETRIEVAL



Special Retrieval, the espionage division of BUHABS, has been given an extensive grant to expand operations. We have therefore invested in a hotmail address, as you can see above. If you have any embarrassing photo's or gossip about any BUHABS members then please don't hesitate to send it to us. You can almost guarantee it will be printed in these pages. Anonymity of sender is assured.

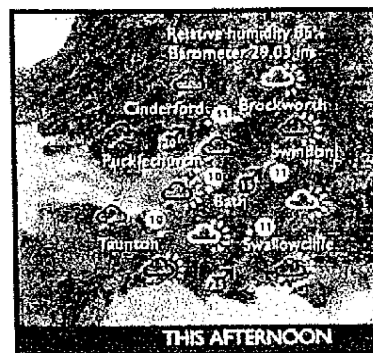
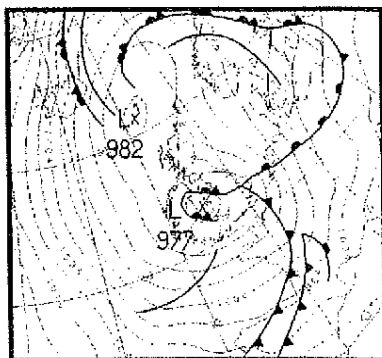
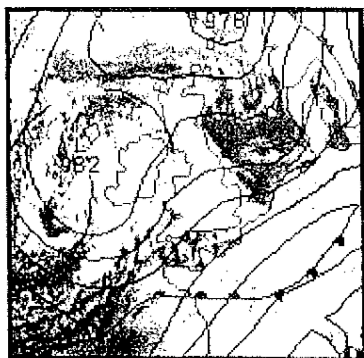
Special Retrieval's premier operative, Big Bad John, spent part of his summer on a mission into deepest, darkest Africa. Whilst on Safari near the Oogi Boogi river, he caught sight of the species pictured to the left. Apart from the fact it was wearing glasses, the main thing that struck him was it's resemblance to a BUHABS member. If you have an idea of who it is, drop special retrieval a line.

WEATHER TO FLY OR NOT TO FLY ? THAT IS THE QUESTION...

After a fantastic summer of flying to end the BUHABS year, a couple of flights were squeezed in at the beginning of October, but last week it all went pear shaped. In certain cases, when Britain is under two feet of water for example, it is obvious the weather is not good for ballooning. Sometimes though, you may wonder why a flight is cancelled when it is a glorious day. Below I will try to explain how the pilots decide whether to fly a particular slot... or not!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS:

On Wednesdays we have a look at the weather charts to see which of the four weekend slots will be flyable. We look at various web page charts, examples can be seen below. Therefore if it looks like there is no hope of flying, we won't waste your time and advertise it as a slot. Below are three different charts from last Thursday.



HALF AN HOUR BEFORE 'PHONE-IN:

The decision to fly is taken just before 'phone-in. There is a special balloon pilots briefing service run by the local region of the British Balloon and Airship Club. There is also an automated system that allows us to find out aviation actuals and forecasts for the next few hours provided by the National Air Traffic Service that we use to find out weather at RAF Lyneham and Bristol *International*.

SO WHY CAN WE NOT FLY THEN?

- WIND:** If the wind is forecast to be over 10 knots on the surface we won't fly. The air needs to be fairly still to inflate the balloon and also to land it without requiring a landing strip! Sometimes there is an inversion layer of cold, still air on the ground and up to several hundred feet in the mornings and this can allow us to fly even if its windy at 2000 ft.
- RAIN:** You get wet - you take off - the van gets stuck in the mud - you get wet - you land in the mud - you get muddy - our very expensive balloon gets muddy. Lovely.
- THUNDER:** Thunder clouds suck - quite literally. Not wanting to get sucked in, we stay firmly on the ground.
- MIST/FOG:** Normally only a problem on morning flights (as those who came out on the morning of Sunday 22 October will tell you). There is a minimum visibility we need for flying legally, but it often clears for take-off. Normally.
- CLOUDS:** Certain cloud types are associated with weather that is unsuitable for flying, like cumulus clouds during the middle of summer days that indicate rising thermals. The height of the cloudbase and the amount of coverage are also important, especially when flying in controlled airspace like around 'Bristol *International* Airport'.

Tim Dudman

If you have any comments, queries, or quarrels with The Ripline (or if you feel like flexing your literary talents and writing an article yourself!) please don't hesitate to email me (John Burnett) at the following address: [REDACTED]